

**Experience Your America
Analysis of Evaluation
Report 5/23/2000**

Goal: To test the effectiveness of the "Experience Your America" exhibit message. The intent was to test at a site that had a diverse audience

Setting: An evaluation of the "Experience Your America" exhibit was performed on Saturday, May 6th, on the Mall in Washington, D.C. as part of the National Public Service Awareness Week Expo. Weather conditions were extremely hot (90+) and humid for so early in the season.

The expo was held on the mall between the NASM and NANH in two large, fenced compounds with a tented space (one area for DOD and the other for all other government agencies). Each area had a single entrance without directional signage. As part of a larger "trade show" setting, the exhibit competed for the attention of a diverse, "browsing" audience. The NPS booth was about 10' by 40' and had a number of displays. This exhibit was displayed in one section of the space, but was not self-contained and adjacent NPS displays competed for attention.

The exhibit included an explanatory panel on the exhibit and the evaluation process; the exhibit's introductory panel; the introductory program displayed on an I-Book computer on a nearby table; the four panels on Pride, Discovery, Recreation, and Renewal; the banner with NPS identification and exhibit title; and the recruitment panel on an easel and the recruitment video on a nearby table. Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) staff Neil MacKay, Chris Dearing and Lisa Royse conducted the evaluation as an exit interview.

Based on the setting and observable visitor actions, several issues were immediately apparent. Visitors approached booths with certain elements:

- Attractive elements, such as a stuffed beaver or other fascinating object, live animals, or interactive component (ie., tank simulator).
- Giveaways such as candy, trading cards, pens, toys, etc.
- Charismatic staff who greeted visitors and "pulled" them into their space (the importance of this element cannot be too strongly emphasized).

Visitors did not approach booths where:

- Staff were self-involved, unresponsive or inattentive.
- Giveaways were primarily paper, especially government publications (an exception was NPS brochures).

Evaluation: The evaluation was conducted by HFC staff between 10:00am and 3:00pm. Nineteen surveys were completed with over 20 individuals (evenly split between men and women); fairly evenly split between 19-30 year olds and 30-50

year olds with five over 50; and primarily in groups of two or individually;

- About half spent time viewing the introductory program (displayed on an I-Book computer on a table). Some visitors felt that they could control the program flow by the keyboard (though their actions had no impact on the program which was automatic) and this interaction appeared to increase their viewing time.
- Over 50% spent time reading panel text. Comments ranged from "liked text" to "too much text" to "need more information."
- Most visitors understood the point of the exhibit and several used the word "diversity" to describe NIPS.
- Nearly all visitors had visited a National Park. Several were familiar with and named several local parks including the Mall and felt that the parks were for them.
- Comments on parks included interest in scenery and variety of parks.
- Perceptions of NPS were that it was more expansive, more modern, and more interactive than they had realized.
- Visitors were surprised by the diversity of sites and specifically mentioned the Statue of Liberty, urban parks, and literary sites. The MLK home site was mentioned by three visitors and it was only shown in the introductory program.
- Three-dimensional items and objects were commented on and/or touched, especially the walking stick.
- Images that visitors commented about included the swimmer, the Statue of Liberty, motorcycle, and kayak. Negative comments on images included too many small images on the middle panels and the lack of represented ethnic diversity.
- Visitors specifically mentioned liking the intor and discovery panels.
- The visitor comment book was looked at by only three of the visitors and overall comments were mixed about whether they would be interested in it.
- The recruitment display was not viewed by visitors (competing noises made it impossible to hear) nor was it perceived to be part of the exhibit.

Secondary Survey:

This survey was done on Thursday, May 11th, with NPS staff in a training program at HFC. The display was limited to the five panels. Twelve staff wrote their comments which reflected some of the same comments noted above-such as diversity and variety of parks, modernized NPS, liked 3-D objects, text too small, etc. Other comments included-didn't like to encourage touching, arrowhead needs to be more prominent, renewal panel was bland, pride panel was cluttered, stuck in 'nature renewal' mindset, why was the Smoky's walking stick next to Denali hiker image, why Michel Jordan quote, and don't duplicate parks.

NPS Traveling Exhibit "Experience Your America"

Interview Questions for 5/6/00 Formative Evaluation on the Mall

Interviewer: Lisa Chris Neil

Observation start time: end time:

Observations:

- What do you think this exhibit is about?
- Have you ever visited a National Park?
- If so, how many parks have you visited and how often?
- What interests you about the Parks having seen the exhibit?
- After viewing the exhibit are you more or less inclined to visit a National Park?
- What was your perception of the NPS before viewing the exhibit, and has it changed?
- Do you think the national parks are for you?
- Were there any surprises in the exhibit? If so, what were they?
- What did you get from the introductory program?
- ... four panels?
- ... recruitment panel?
- We are planning to have a visitor comment book in the final exhibit; would this be something that you would be interested in?
- Was anything unclear or confusing in the exhibit? Text, graphics, objects?
- Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for improving the exhibit?
- Is there anything else that you would like to say about the exhibit or this process?

Subject gender: M F

Age: below 18 19-30 30-50 50+

Number of subjects: 1 2 3+

Ethnicity: Primary Language: State residence: